



Telecommuting

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Telecommuting allows employees to work from home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of their work week. The Rowan County Public Library (“the Library”) considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and their position are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and positions but not for others, and is not an entitlement or a companywide benefit, nor does it in any way change the terms and conditions of employment with the Library.

PROCEDURES

Telecommuting may be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. An employee or the Executive Director may suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three (3) months, and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the Executive Director. Where appropriate, every effort must be made to provide no less than 30 days’ notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, child care, and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. However, there may be instances when no notice is possible or when a full 30 days’ notice is infeasible.

An employee may only telecommute for a maximum of one-fourth (25%) of their regular weekly work schedule. Full-time employees who work 37.5 hours per week are generally allowed nine hours and 15 minutes (9.25 hours) of telecommuting time. Part-time employees who work 20 hours per week are generally allowed five (5) hours of telecommuting time.

ELIGIBILITY

Employees requesting formal telecommuting arrangements will receive approval at the discretion of the Executive Director. General guidelines will include no less than 12 months of continuous, regular employment with the Library and a satisfactory performance record.



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Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, an employee and the Executive Director will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following considerations:

- Employee suitability—The employee and the Executive Director will together assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- Job responsibilities—The employee and the Executive Director will discuss the employee's current duties as assigned and determine whether a telecommuting arrangement is appropriate for their position.
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, and scheduling issues—The employee and the Executive Director will review the physical workspace needs and appropriateness of the proposed location for the telework.
- Tax and other legal implications—The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, Kentucky, and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working from a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee and the Executive Director reach an agreement regarding these considerations, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three (3)-month trial period will commence. Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and/or e-mail between the employee and the Executive Director, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and/or issues.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and their supervisor will be agreed to as part of any telecommuting arrangement, and will be more formal during the trial period. Following the conclusion of the trial period, the telecommuting employee and the Executive Director will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office, or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the position, duties, and persons involved.



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EQUIPMENT

On a case-by-case basis, the Library will determine, with information supplied by the employee and their supervisor, the appropriate equipment needed for each telecommuting arrangement, including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines, and other office equipment and/or supplies. Library information technology staff will serve as a resource in this matter.

Equipment supplied by the Library will be maintained by the Library. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the Library, will be maintained by the employee. The Library accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment, and reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all Library property received, and agrees to take appropriate action to protect such items from damage or theft. If a staff member's employment is terminated, all Library property provided for any telecommuting arrangement will be returned promptly to the Library.

The Library will supply a telecommuting employee with appropriate office supplies and/or stationery as deemed necessary by the employee and their supervisor. The Library will also reimburse the employee for business-related expenses, such as phone calls and shipping costs, that are reasonably incurred as a result of the employee's duties.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. The Library shall not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of any employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture, or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to such a home office space.

SECURITY

Consistent with the Library's expectations of information security for employees working on-site, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary Library and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps may include the use of locking file cabinets and/or desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the employee's position, duties, and environment.



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SAFETY

Employees are expected to independently maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by an employee in a home office location and in conjunction with their regular work duties are covered by the Library's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor and/or the Executive Director of such injuries as soon as is practical. An employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their home workspace.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and the successful execution of job duties. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members and/or other co-residents of their home environment prior to entering a trial period.

TIME WORKED

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the Library's current timekeeping procedures and/or system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per work week require approval in advance by an employee's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of a telecommuting agreement.

AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, or business travel. Such arrangements are approved by the Executive Director on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance, and with a primary focus on the needs of the Library.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for both the employee and the Library, and with the consent of the employee's healthcare provider, if appropriate.